

APR 2004

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STATE OF MICHIGAN  
IN THE SUPREME COURT

On Appeal from the Michigan Court of Appeals  
Judge Smolenski Presiding, and  
Judges White and Kelly

DANIEL LEE STRAUB,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

PHILLIP MICHAEL COLLETTE and  
TERESA M. HEIL-WYLIE, jointly  
and severally,

Defendants-Appellants.

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Supreme Ct. No. 124757

Ct. of Appeals No. 236505

Lower Ct. No. 00-11405-NI

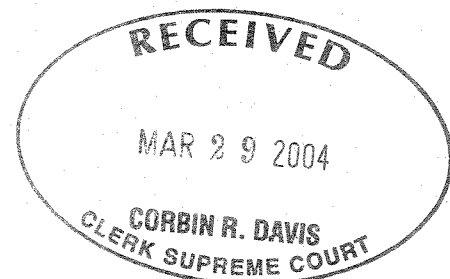
APPELLANTS' REPLY BRIEF

ORAL ARGUMENT REQUESTED

Respectfully submitted:

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## REPLY ARGUMENT

**A. Plaintiff's assertion that 1995 P.A. 222 was not a return to the standards of *Cassidy v. McGovern* is in error.**

One thing is clear; plaintiff cannot and does not claim that he has a case that compares to either the injuries held to meet the threshold in *Cassidy*,<sup>1</sup> or the standards of *DiFranco*<sup>2</sup> when it outlined the effect of the general ability to lead a normal life test. "Apparently, only plaintiffs who are bedridden, cannot care for themselves, or are unable perform any type of work can satisfy this test." 427 Mich 32, 66. Plaintiff instead argues that if there is "any" effect on his normal life, (Appellee's Brief, p 31), he has the requisite effect, despite this Court's remand order in *Kreiner*, holding that "any effect does not suffice. . . [and] the effect must be on one's *general* ability to lead his normal life." (14a)

To get to this result, plaintiff contends that 1995 PA 222 was not a return to the standards of *Cassidy v McGovern*, and therefore plaintiff says at page 31 of his brief, that "it is proper for the court to compare the plaintiff's own unique lifestyle before and after the accident. [Citing *May v. Sommerfield*, 240 Mich App 504; 617 NW2d 920 (2000).] If the accident related injuries have had **any** affect on the plaintiff's general ability to lead his normal life, then the plaintiff has satisfied the third element of the test." (Emphasis in original). And, despite this Court's instruction in the *Kreiner* remand

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<sup>1</sup>*Cassidy v McGovern*, 415 Mich 483; 330 NW2d 541 (1984).

<sup>2</sup>*DiFranco v Pickard*, 427 Mich 32; 398 NW2d 896 (1986).

order<sup>3</sup> that *general* ability is the focus of the test, plaintiff's brief does not come to grips with the meaning of term "general", except to suggest that it has no meaning and should be read out of the statute:

"Based on the failure of any appellate decision to place any importance of the word "general" to qualify the word ability in undertaking an analysis of the "life impact" element, **Plaintiff-Appellee submits that the word "general" adds little or no meaning to the rest of the statute.** (Appellee's brief, p. 32, emphasis added.)

Plaintiff's position that *Cassidy* and *DiFranco* are irrelevant, and that "general" has no meaning is untenable. Ignoring "general" would be clear error. "Every word should be given meaning and no word should be treated as surplusage or rendered nugatory if at all possible." *Stowers v Wolodzko*, 386 Mich 119, 133; 191 NW2d 355 (1971). Of course it is possible to give "general" meaning. It is apparent on its face that the statutory definition of "serious impairment of body function" in 1995 P.A. 222 was a legislative overruling of *DiFranco* and an adoption of the general ability test that had been the law under *Cassidy*. The Legislature retained the essence of authoritative constructions by this Court in the face of two choices. The essence of the judicial construction retained was the question of law for a court<sup>4</sup>, suggesting an objective review in cases without factual disputes, and, coupled this with terms of objectivity. An important body function had to be impaired, and the injury had to affect the general ability, not any ability to lead a normal life as plaintiff argues. The Court of Appeals has reasonably concluded that the Legislature in 1995 P.A. 222 returned to the standards of *Cassidy*, such that *Cassidy* and its progeny are instructive for interpreting the codified

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<sup>3</sup>*Kreiner v Fischer*, 468 Mich 884; 661 NW2d 234 (2003).

<sup>4</sup>MCL 500.3135(2)(a).

definition of “serious impairment of body function”. *Kern v. Blethern-Coluni*, 240 Mich App 333, 342; 612 NW2d 838 (2000), *Miller v. Purcell*, 246 Mich App 244, 247; 631 NW2d 760 (2001), and *Jackson v. Nelson*, 252 Mich App 643, 649-650; 654 NW2d 604 (2002).

Moreover, plaintiff’s analysis of the effect of “general” is incomplete. According to most common dictionary definitions, “general” means concerned with or applicable to the whole, or every member of a class or category that defendants submit requires pervasiveness of effect as applied in *Cassidy* (someone who couldn’t walk without a walker for seven months, with walking affecting pervasively most all activities quite apart from employment as a farmer), and recognized in *DiFranco* (bedridden, unable to return to work, unable to care for oneself, and unable to perform day to day activities even with difficulty). This is usually reflected in the first definition appearing under the word “general” used as an adjective. See attachment A. Indeed, plaintiff’s cited dictionary is not to the contrary: “involving or belonging to the whole of a body, class or type.” (4b, emphasis added). A person’s “general” ability to lead his normal life therefore requires pervasive impact on the person’s life as a whole. Plaintiff’s focus on his temporary lifestyle incursions and temporary time off work ignores the pervasiveness inherent in “general”, since he was not bedridden, nor unable to return to work, nor unable to care for himself, all examples in *DiFranco* where pervasiveness is present and affecting most activities.

Respectfully, plaintiff places far too much emphasis on the perceived objective/subjective dichotomy. In the context of an important body function as a

starting point, for most people the resultant impact on the general ability to lead their normal lives depends on the same core functions such as mobility, thinking and caring for one's self. Lifestyle activities will naturally differ such that, for example, an injury to a person's finger may interfere with his playing of a musical instrument, whereas the same finger injury to a non-musician might have little consequence. But for either person the impairment does not meet the threshold because the consequences do not pervasively cut across all, or nearly all, aspects of the person's life and therefore cannot be said to interfere with the person's general ability to lead his normal life.

Plaintiff's argument is also contrary to *DiFranco*, where the Court recognized that under the *Cassidy* holding the inquiry is directed to the plaintiff's own normal life not to a hypothetical normal life:

**"The most obvious problem is defining what constitutes 'a normal life'. The Court of Appeals has never attempted to define the phrase, *since it usually concludes that the injuries sustained did not significantly affect the plaintiff's life style or daily activities.*"**

*DiFranco v. Pickard*, 427 Mich 32, 62-63. (Emphasis in original.)

The Court went on to explain that although the *Cassidy* test was stated to be objective, courts applying it did consider the injured person's own activities. *DiFranco*, 427 Mich 32, 63. The fact that Court of Appeals panels applying *Cassidy* did consider the injured person's own life activities is borne out in cases extant at the time 1995 PA 222 was adopted. For example, in *Burk v. Warren (After Remand)*, 137 Mich App 715, 725; 359 NW2d 541 (1984), the plaintiff incurred a fractured clavicle and his arm was immobilized for about one month. The Court of Appeals considered the effect on his own activities (not a hypothetical normal life): "This disrupted his sporting activities, was

inconvenient and deterred plaintiff from normal activities for the month plaintiff wore the brace cast.” Finding the fracture did not have any permanent or long-range effect on the plaintiff’s life, the Court found no serious impairment<sup>5</sup>.

The cited portion of *DiFranco* and these examples demonstrate that application of the *Cassidy* test turned not on any distinction between the plaintiff’s own normal life and a hypothetical normal life, i.e., not on an objective/subjective dichotomy which plaintiff now advocates, but on whether the effect was so pervasive and long-term as to impair the person’s general ability to lead a (or his) normal life. Given this history of *Cassidy*, its progeny and the *DiFranco* Court’s interpretation of those cases, plaintiff’s suggestion that the Legislature’s wording, “general ability to lead his or her normal life” signals a wholesale rejection of *Cassidy*’s general ability test is without merit. The likely reason for the Legislature’s use of the phrase “his or her,” rather than “a,” is stylistic. As pointed out in *DiFranco*, 427 Mich 43, 66, there is no such thing as a hypothetical person’s normal life. The Court in *DiFranco* fully recognized that notwithstanding *Cassidy*’s reference to “a normal life,” Court of Appeals panels usually did consider the particular plaintiff’s own activities, 427 Mich 32, 62-63, and concluded that, “as applied

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<sup>5</sup>*Accord, Williams v. Payne*, 131 Mich App 403, 409; 346 NW2d 564 (1984) (the Court considered the effect of a thumb injury on the plaintiff’s own particular activities, such as difficulty in performing household chores, but found no serious impairment because the injury did not affect her general ability to live a normal life); *LaHousse v. Hess*, 125 Mich App 14, 18; 336 NW2d 219 (1983) (the Court found the injury did interfere with the plaintiff’s ability to live a normal life because it prevented her from walking for a significant period of time and a serious impairment as a matter of law found; plaintiff fractured her clavicle and her leg, and she underwent surgery to insert a steel rod in her leg, she was hospitalized for five days and her leg was in traction, and for three months afterward she was unable to move herself about without the aid of a wheelchair, a walker or crutches.)

by the Court of Appeals...only plaintiffs who are bedridden, cannot care for themselves, or are unable to perform any type of work can satisfy the test.” 427 Mich 32, 66. Given the Legislature’s re-adoption of the “general ability” test that had been authoritatively construed by this Court in *DiFranco*, through language virtually identical to *Cassidy*, this Court should hold it is now the law of the State.

Plaintiff’s attempt to avoid the ruling in *Cassidy* and its progeny, as described in *DiFranco*, also requires one to ignore the underlying purpose of limiting motor vehicle accident litigation to cases involving the most serious injuries. Plaintiff asserts at page 18 of his brief that the no-fault act was designed to reduce litigation over economic losses, with no similar purpose to reduce tort litigation for non-economic losses. Plaintiff’s argument ignores the reality that a high tort threshold is integral to the goals of the no-fault act. It is true that the Act in the vast majority of cases eliminates litigation over economic losses by providing expensive and generous first party benefits without regard to fault. But in order to do this, the trade-off was to restrict the ability to recover for non-economic losses. Restricting the number of cases that go to a jury only to those accidents involving the most serious injuries, is essential to maintaining the financial viability of the no-fault system. Put simply, the viability of the no-fault act depends on a high tort threshold. See *Cassidy*, 415 Mich 483, 500, and *Shavers v. Attorney General*, 402 Mich 554; 267 NW2d 72 (1978), and the discussion at pp. 10-13 of defendants’ first brief. See also, *Braden v. Lee*, 133 Mich App 215, 217; 348 NW2d 63 (1984), decided under *Cassidy*, noting that in considering whether the threshold has been met, the Court should be mindful of “the legislative reasons for limiting the

recovery for noneconomic losses, prevention of overcompensation of minor injuries and reduction of litigation in automobile accident cases,” citing *Cassidy*, 415 Mich 483, 502.

Plaintiff’s reliance on the language “his or her” as a means to avoid the general ability test as adopted in *Cassidy* and its progeny should be rejected. The Court should hold that 1995 P.A. 222 marked a return to the general ability test as applied in *Cassidy* and subsequent Court of Appeals cases and as explained in *DiFranco*.

**B. Defendants’ brief does not raise any new issues, but simply requests the Court to apply the statutory definition of serious impairment of body function as a whole.**

Plaintiff also contends that the question whether the plaintiff incurred a serious impairment of an **important** body function was not raised below and is therefore not preserved. Plaintiff’s brief, pp. 48-49. The argument reflects a misunderstanding of principles of statutory construction. Defendant obviously did raise below the tort threshold of MCL 500.3135(7), which defines “serious impairment of body function as follows:

“As used in this section, ‘serious impairment of body function’ means an objectively manifested impairment of an important body function that affects the person’s general ability to lead his or her normal life.”

While this is sometimes broken down into three elements for the purpose of analysis—(1) objectively manifested impairment; (2) of an important body function; (3) that affects the person’s general ability to lead his or her normal life, it is in reality a unified test which must be considered as a whole, with each part informing the other parts in order to give contextual meaning. See *Sweatt v. Dep’t of Corrections*, 468 Mich 172, 179-180; 661 NW2d 201 (2003), and the discussion at pp. 18-19 of defendant’s

first brief. The ultimate effect on general ability to lead a normal life cannot be divorced from the context of an important body function which is the starting point. Thus, plaintiff's assertion that defendants are raising a new issue only emphasizes his effort to avoid reading the statute as a whole and in context. Reading the statute as a whole requires the Court to consider whether the body function involved is an **important** one, and whether it affects the person's **general** ability to lead his normal life. These key terms, considered together and with the no-fault act's longstanding tort threshold that the impairment must be **serious**, and in the context of the other significant tort thresholds of death and permanent serious disfigurement, further support the finding that the Legislature intended the general ability test to be a high threshold that cannot be met by an impairment such as the plaintiff's which amounts merely to lifestyle incursions and short-term loss of employment, rather than cutting across all or nearly all aspects of the plaintiff's life as whole.

Attempting to avoid cases of this Court saying that finger injuries do not present threshold cases, plaintiff cites two published cases and one unpublished case for the proposition that the ability to move one's hand is an important body function. *Meklir v. Bigham*, 147 Mich App 716; 383 NW2d 95 (1985), *Braden v. Lee*, 133 Mich App 215; 348 NW2d 63 (1984), and *Hicks v. Mumin*, Docket No. 214004 (January 12, 2001) (10b). However, all three ultimately support Defendants position that the tort threshold is not met with finger or hand injuries. What the cases reveal is that the threshold test is applied as a whole, and, that little analysis has been given to the important body function component and identifying unimportant body functions. The result is a dearth

of case law on unimportant body functions, which has contributed to parties such as plaintiff ignoring this and taking positions such as taken here, that any effect on the ability to lead a normal life results in a tort threshold injury.

*Meklir* and *Braden* were both decided under *Cassidy*. In both cases the Court considered the *Cassidy* test as a whole and found the injuries did not meet the threshold. In *Meklir*, the Court found the ability to move one's hand is an important body function, but without any discussion of a principled distinction between important and unimportant body functions, then found no impairment of the plaintiff's general ability to lead her normal life. 147 Mich App 716, 720. In *Braden* the plaintiff experienced numbness in his hand and was off work for four months. After return to work he continued to experience pain and swelling in his hand. The Court did not expressly address whether the ability to use one's hand is an important body function, but held that plaintiff's hand injury did not meet the threshold, as plaintiff was not incapacitated by his injuries nor did they interfere in any significant manner with his normal life style. 133 Mich App 215, 218. In *Hicks v. Mumin*, the Court again did not expressly address whether the movement of one's hand is an important body function, but it affirmed the trial court's grant of summary disposition in favor of the defendants, finding the injury did not affect his general ability to lead his normal life and therefore did not amount to a serious impairment of body function.

All of these cases plaintiff cites really support defendant's position that the serious impairment of body function test must be applied as a whole. While one of them addressed "important body function" in passing where a hand injury was involved,

they raise a legitimate question whether hand and finger injuries suffice for important body function or effect on general ability to lead a normal life, since all reached the ultimate result that the tort threshold was not met.

### **CONCLUSION AND RELIEF REQUESTED**

Plaintiff is in error in suggesting that any effect on the ability to lead a normal life results in a serious impairment of body function. This position is contrary to the history of *Cassidy*, *DiFranco*, and the subsequent legislation adopted with reference to these authoritative constructions. Plaintiff's injuries do not meet these standards with his finger injuries on his non-dominant hand, that do not compare to the standards of *Cassidy* to which the Legislature returned in preference to *DiFranco*. Defendants request that the Court of Appeals be reversed and the trial court order granting summary disposition to defendants be reinstated.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 29, 2004

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general[2,noun]  
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attorney general  
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Main Entry: **1** *gen·er·al* **4**

Pronunciation: 'jen-r&l, 'je-n&-

Function: *adjective*

Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from Latin *generalis*, from *gener-*, *genus* kind, class -- more at KIN

**1** : involving, applicable to, or affecting the whole

**2** : involving, relating to, or applicable to every member of a class, kind, or group <the *general* equation of a straight line>

**3** : not confined by specialization or careful limitation

**4** : belonging to the common nature of a group of like individuals : **GENERIC**

**5 a** : applicable to or characteristic of the majority of individuals involved : **PREVALENT** **b** : concerned or dealing with universal rather than particular aspects

**6** : relating to, determined by, or concerned with main elements rather than limited details <bearing a *general* resemblance to the original>

**7** : holding superior rank or taking precedence over others similarly titled <the *general* manager>

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### general

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gen·er·al [ jén·nə·rəl ]

adjective

**1. overall:** relating to or including all or nearly all of the members of a category or group, or all or nearly all parts of a whole  
• *a general increase in demand*

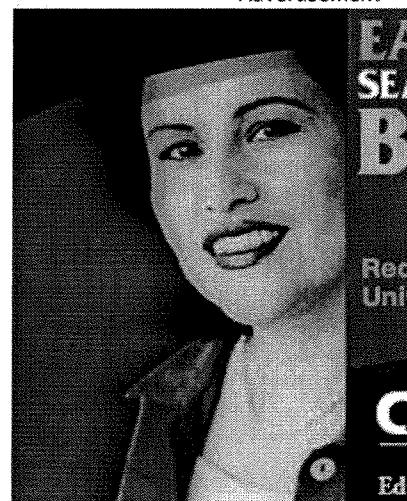
**2. usual:** applying or happening in most cases  
• *as a general rule*

**3. widespread:** shared or participated in by many  
• *a general sense that something ought to be done*

**4. miscellaneous:** having a varied content or wide scope  
• *a general store*

**5. not specialized:** not specialized, or lacking specialized knowledge  
• *a book that was intended for the general reader*

**6. not specific:** not specific, detailed, or clearly defined  
• *She spoke in the most general terms.*



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**Definition**

**general** (COMMON) [Show phonetics]

adjective

**1** involving or relating to most or all people, things or places, especially when these are considered as a unit:

*The general feeling at the meeting was that a vote should be taken.*

*There is general concern about rising crime rates.*

*My general impression of the place was good.*

*The talk is intended to be of general **interest** (= of interest to most people).*

*UK FORMAL Rain will become more general in the south-east during the afternoon.*

**2** not detailed, but including the most basic or necessary information:

*What he said was very general.*

*The school aims to give children a general background in a variety of subjects.*

*I'm not an expert, so I can only speak **in general terms** on this matter.*

**3** including a lot of things or subjects and not limited to only one or a few:

*general knowledge*

**4** used as part of the title of a job of someone who is in charge of a whole organization or company:

*the general **manager***

*the General Secretary of the UN*

**the general** noun [S]

things considered as a unit and without giving attention to details:

*His book moves from the general to the particular.*

**generalist** [Show phonetics]

adjective, noun [C] FORMAL

(someone who is) not specialized:

Meteorites

Space

Sun

Amateur  
Astronomy

CAMBRIDGE

ASTRONOMY

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

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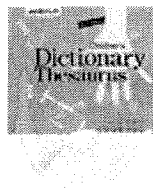


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[je hn](#) rEl

Definition [1. relating to or characteristic of the whole.](#)

Example the general public.

Synonyms [blanket](#) , [generic](#) (1) , [collective](#) (2) , [common](#) (1) , [universal](#) (3)

Crossref. [global](#) , [broad](#)

Syn.

Similar [popular](#) , [inclusive](#) , [comprehensive](#) , [public](#)

Words

Definition [2. not detailed; nonspecific; indefinite.](#)

Example general ideas.

Synonyms [indefinite](#) , [vague](#) (1) , [nonspecific](#) {[specific](#) (1,2)} , [indistinct](#) (1) , [indeterminate](#) (1) , [broad](#) (2)

Crossref. [gross](#)

Syn.

Similar [inexact](#)

Words

Definition [3. common, customary, or widespread.](#)

Example The general opinion is that he is crazy.

Synonyms [conventional](#) (1,2,3) , [widespread](#) (1) ,



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< generable general admission >

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The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000.

## general

**SYLLABICATION:** gen·er·al

**PRONUNCIATION:** jěn'ər-əl

**ADJECTIVE:** **1.** Concerned with, applicable to, or affecting the whole or every member of a class or category: "*subduing all her impressions as a woman, to something more general*" (Virginia Woolf). **2.** Affecting or characteristic of the majority of those involved; prevalent: *general discontent*. **3.** Of or affecting the entire body: *general paralysis*. **4.** Being usually the case; true or applicable in most instances but not all: *the general correctness of her decisions*. **5a.** Not limited in scope, area, or application: *as a general rule*. **b.** Not limited to or dealing with one class of things; diversified: *general studies*. **6.** Involving only the main features rather than precise details: *a general grasp of the subject*. **7.** Highest or superior in rank: *the general manager*.

**NOUN:** **1a.** *abbr.* **GEN** or **Gen** or **Gen.** A commissioned rank in the U.S. Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps that is above lieutenant general. **b.** One who holds this rank or a similar rank in another military organization. **2.** A general officer. **3.** A statement, principle, or fact that embraces or is applicable to the whole. **4.** General anesthesia. **5.** *Archaic* The public.

**IDIOM:** **in general** Generally.

**ETYMOLOGY:** Middle English, from Latin *generālis*, from *genus*, *gener-*, kind. See **genē-** in Appendix I.

**OTHER FORMS:** **gen'er-al-ness** —NOUN

**SYNONYMS:** *general*, *common*, *generic*, *universal* These adjectives mean belonging to, relating to, or affecting the whole: *the general welfare*; *a common*



general

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**gen·er·al** **Pronunciation Key** (jĕn'ər-əl)  
*adj.*

1. Concerned with, applicable to, or affecting the whole or every member of a class or category: "subduing all her impressions as a woman, to something more general" (Virginia Woolf).
2. Affecting or characteristic of the majority of those involved; prevalent: *general discontent*.
3. Of or affecting the entire body: *general paralysis*.
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  - a. Not limited in scope, area, or application: *as a general rule*.
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*n.*

- a. **Abbr. GEN or Gen or Gen.** A commissioned rank in the U.S. Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps that is above lieutenant general.
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*Definitions from The Online Plain Text English Dictionary:*

### General

- (a.) As a whole; in gross; for the most part.
- (a.) Common to many, or the greatest number; widely spread; prevalent; extensive, though not universal; as, a general opinion; a general custom.
- (a.) Comprehending many species or individuals; not special or particular; including all particulars; as, a general inference or conclusion.
- (a.) Having a relation to all; common to the whole; as, Adam, our general sire.
- (a.) Not restrained or limited to a precise import; not specific; vague; indefinite; lax in signification; as, a loose and general expression.
- (a.) One of the chief military officers of a government or country; the commander of an army, of a body of men not less than a brigade. In European armies, the highest military rank next below field marshal.
- (a.) Relating to a genus or kind; pertaining to a whole class or order; as, a general law of animal or vegetable economy.
- (a.) The chief of an order of monks, or of all the houses or congregations under the same rule.
- (a.) The public; the people; the vulgar.
- (a.) The roll of the drum which calls the troops together; as, to beat the general.
- (a.) The whole; the total; that which comprehends or relates to all, or the chief part; -- opposed to particular.
- (a.) Usual; common, on most occasions; as, his general habit or method.

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# ARTFL Project: Webster Dictionary, 1913

Searching for: "general"

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## General (Page: 618)

Gen"er\*al (?), a. [F. général, fr. L. generalis. See Genus.]

1. Relating to a genus or kind; pertaining to a whole class or order; as, a general law of animal or vegetable economy.

2. Comprehending many species or individuals; not special or particular; including all particulars; as, a general inference or conclusion.

3. Not restrained or limited to a precise import; not specific; vague; indefinite; lax in signification; as, a loose and general expression.

4. Common to many, or the greatest number; widely spread; prevalent; extensive, though not universal; as, a general opinion; a general custom.

This **general** applause and cheerful shout Argue your wisdom and your love to Richard.  
*Shak.*

5. Having a relation to all; common to the whole; as, Adam, our general sire. *Milton.*

6. As a whole; in gross; for the most part.

His **general** behavior vain, ridiculous. *Shak.*

7. Usual; common, on most occasions; as, his general habit or method. *&hand*; *The word general*, annexed to a name of office, usually denotes *chief* or *superior*; as, attorney-general; adjutant general; commissary general; quartermaster general; vicar-general, etc. General agent (Law), an agent whom a principal employs to transact all his business of a particular kind, or to act in his affairs generally. -- General assembly. See the Note under Assembly. -- General average, General Court. See under Average, Court. -- General court-martial (Mil.), the highest military and naval judicial tribunal. -- General dealer (Com.), a shopkeeper who deals in all articles in common use. -- General demurrer (Law), a demurrer which objects to a pleading in general terms, as insufficient, without specifying the defects. *Abbott*. -- General epistle, a canonical epistle. -- General guides (Mil.), two sergeants (called the *right*, and the *left*, general guide) posted opposite the right and left flanks of an infantry battalion, to preserve accuracy in marching. *Farrow*. -- General hospitals (Mil.), hospitals established to receive sick and wounded sent from the field hospitals. *Farrow*. General issue (Law), an issue made by a general plea, which traverses the whole declaration or indictment at once, without offering any special matter to evade it. *Bouvier*. *Burrill*. -- General lien (Law), a right to detain a chattel, etc., until payment is made of any balance due on a general account. -- General officer (Mil.), any officer having a rank above that of colonel. -- General orders (Mil.), orders from headquarters published to the whole command. -- General practitioner, in the United States, one who practices medicine in all its branches without confining himself to any specialty; in England, one who practices both as physician and as surgeon. -- General ship, a ship not chartered or let to particular parties. -- General term (Logic), a term which is